



2022/2023 Annual Report:

Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR)

Statement of commitment or endorsement of the Voluntary Principles

IMPACT is committed to promoting the implementation of the VPSHR internationally and believes that the VPSHR initiative can help promote multistakeholder dialogue and problem-solving between governments, companies, civil society organizations and local communities impacted by extractive sector operations. Furthermore, we believe that the VPSHR provide an important basis upon which oil, gas and mining companies can implement effective policies, procedures and commitments to minimize the risk of contributing to human rights violations. Like all multistakeholder processes, IMPACT believes that the VPSHR must continue to progress and evolve in order to maintain its relevance. This includes clearly demonstrating positive impact, where able, as well as improving accountability for their implementation.

Relevant policies, procedures, and guidelines to implement the Voluntary Principles

IMPACT adopted and operationalized a new security management system in 2018, which includes site assessments, incident reporting, and various tools for staff, amongst other components. IMPACT also updated its Code of Conduct, adopted a Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy and adopted a draft Conflict of Interest Policy and a draft Safeguarding Policy. Also, on 15th October 2018, IMPACT signed on to the Canadian Council for International Co-operation's (CCIC) Leaders' Pledge on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct.

Through its projects, such as the Just Gold project in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ivory Coast, IMPACT endeavors to introduce supply chain due diligence and transparency in the artisanal gold sector, in order to identify and address human rights and corruption risks. This includes risks related to the provision of security (private or public) in and around artisanal and small-scale mine sites.

Integrating the VPs into IMPACT's security management

While the VPs were first designed for oil, gas and mining companies, as an NGO working in high-risk areas and making use of private security personnel, IMPACT has drawn from the IGT for the Voluntary Principles in its own implementation of effective security management policies and processes. While at times IMPACT may contract a very small number of unarmed, private security personnel at one or some of its local offices in Africa, we believe it is important to ensure that these personnel abide by IMPACT's policies and procedures, and will continue to receive briefings on these accordingly. All of IMPACT's contractors are contractually obligated to abide by IMPACT's policies. As an additional measure, IMPACT requires its contractors to sign its Code of Conduct to confirm receipt.

Examples of promoting awareness of the Voluntary Principles throughout the organization

IMPACT regularly holds internal information sessions for staff in order to ensure that they are aware of IMPACT's role in the VPs. IMPACT also holds regular staff meetings to share information across the organization's different focus areas (Regulatory and Legal Reform; Supply Chain Transparency; Illicit Trade and Financing; Gender Equality; and Environmental Stewardship). The VPs are included in these discussions, as IMPACT identifies ways in which it can incorporate the VPs, both process and principles, in its existing programming.

Promoting and advancing awareness or implementation of the Voluntary Principles internationally

This year, with support from the VPI Secretariat, IMPACT participated in a panel presentation on human rights due diligence tools centered around the VPSHR. IMPACT spoke specifically of the new *IGT Companion Tool: Operationalizing the Voluntary Principles through the Lens of Protecting and Respecting the Unique Needs and Rights of Women and Other Disadvantaged Groups*. This offered an opportunity to promote not only the implementation of the VPSHR, but also to share the importance of looking at implementation from the perspective of different groups who may have varying experiences and suffer disproportionate risk of human rights violations.

Engagements with stakeholders on country implementation

IMPACT has limited ability to participate in engagements with stakeholders on country implementation. Where able, we participate in VPs meetings hosted by VPI member governments in Kinshasa (DRC), and our staff members participate in events where accessible. This year, IMPACT served as a peer reviewer for the verification presentation of Alphamine, which operates solely in the DRC.

Implementation of the VPI Gender and Vulnerable Groups Project

IMPACT's participation in the VPI's Gender and Vulnerable Groups Project provided an opportunity for the organization to share its expertise and learnings in this area over the past decade. IMPACT collaborated with Stratos to prepare the *IGT Companion Tool: Operationalizing the Voluntary Principles through the Lens of Protecting and Respecting the Unique Needs and Rights of Women and Other Disadvantaged Groups*. With the support of the VPI Secretariat and the Government of Canada, IMPACT and Stratos delivered a training session alongside the VPI Plenary in Toronto on the content of the new tool. It provided an opportunity for members to reflect on various scenarios using a gender and inclusion lens.

Lessons or issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the organization

IMPACT continues to scale up its work in Central and West Africa, which focus significantly on artisanal and small-scale mining, certification and due diligence, gender and mining as well as broader governance issues related to extractives. This includes new projects in Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. IMPACT will use these opportunities to more thoroughly assess if and how we may be able to further integrate promotion and/or implementation of the VPs with the various stakeholders we work with in this region, as well as at the level of our field operations in a number of countries.